DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 370 187 EA 025 817

AUTHOR Farkas, Steve
TITLE Divided Within, Besieged Without: The Politics of Education in Four American School Districts.
INSTITUTION Public Agenda Foundation, New York, NY.
SPONS AGENCY Charles F. Kettering Foundation, Dayton, Ohio.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 32p.
AVAILABLE FROM Public Agenda Foundation, 6 East 39th Street, New York, NY 10016 ($32).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Conflict; *Educational Change; Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; *Politics of Education; *Public Schools; *School Community Relationship; *School Districts

ABSTRACT

Many educators and community members are concerned about public education and attempts at education reform. Communication, conflict, and attempts at consensus are all parts of carrying out education reform. Four school districts in different parts of the country were examined to see how they handled school reform. The study included interviews with more than 200 educators and citizens from school districts of varying sizes in the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. Findings indicated that what started in each district as genuine reform disintegrated because of conflict, poor communication, suspicion, and anger. The consistency of the behavior across the four districts indicates that the problems are not isolated, but systemwide. The most harmful effect of the conflicts was how they distracted professionals from their primary goal: improving educational opportunities for students. Most education reform attempts focus on teaching, curriculum, standards, assessment, and other factors. However, the politics of education reform and the conflicts that arise from trying to implement it are important issues as well. These problems offer some explanation as to why school reform is so difficult to achieve. (JPT)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

THIS
DOCUMENT
NOT
AVAILABLE
FROM

EDRS